

Research Degrees: Guidance notes series

#3. ADMISSION, REGISTRATION & FEES

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Key words: admission, registration, enrolment, induction, tuition fees, suspension, extension, withdrawal, appeal

3. ADMISSIONS, REGISTRATION & FEES

Related documents

Policy 2R: Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/academic-handbook/section-2/2r---regulations-for-pgr-students.pdf?t=1534525946909>

Fees table 2018-19
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/compliance/fees-table-2018-19-compliance-5.12.17.pdf>

Fee and payment regulations: Home, EU, EEA and Island students - 2018-19
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/compliance/2018-19-fees-regulations-for-home-eu-and-island-students-compliance-5.12.17.pdf>

Fee and payment regulations: Overseas students - 2018-19
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/compliance/2018-19-fees-regulations-for-overseas-students-compliance-5.12.17.pdf>

Research Degree (RD) forms available on line

Further reading

Tuition fees and funding
<https://www.solent.ac.uk/finance/tuition-fees>

How to apply
<https://www.solent.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/how-to-apply>

General Information for doctoral students
<https://www.solent.ac.uk/research/research-degrees/studying-research-degree>

International support at Solent University
<https://www.solent.ac.uk/international/international-students>

Intellectual Property Rights at Solent University
<http://portal.solent.ac.uk/documents/academic-services/policies-procedures-guidelines/intellectual-property-rights-policy.pdf?t=1534437839680>

DOCTORAL STUDENT ADMINISTRATION

How to contact Doctoral Student Administration

1. research.admissions@solent.ac.uk: Applicants should direct all enquiries and correspondence here until they have completed enrolment
2. research.degree@solent.ac.uk: Registered students should direct all enquiries and correspondence here after completing enrolment

RESEARCH DEGREE ADMISSIONS

General information

3. Decisions to admit a doctoral student to study for a research degree (MPhil or PhD) are taken in accordance with the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students (Academic Handbook, 2R).
4. Only applications which are complete by one of the two published annual application deadlines will be considered for registration at the next entry date. Annually there are two entry dates (October and January). Applications which are incomplete at the application deadline may be considered for the next available entry point once they are completed.
5. Applicants may apply to defer entry once accepted to the next entry point (October or January). Applicants may apply to defer for 12 months, but must do this in the knowledge that the University may not be in a position to offer a place to study at a later stage, or may amend the previously proposed supervision arrangements.
6. A key part of the application review process is to determine whether the University is able to offer appropriate supervisory expertise. The non-availability of expert supervision is an acceptable reason for rejecting an application, however eligible the applicant is in other respects.
7. The University does not accept applications to present a thesis in a language other than English.
8. A thesis will normally be made publicly available upon successful completion. Where an applicant, their collaborative establishment or their sponsor wishes the research and thesis to remain confidential for a period after completion of the work, application for approval by the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Research Degrees Committee (RDC) must be made at the time of admission. In cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent stage, a special application must be made to the Chair/Chair of the RDC. The period approved will not normally exceed two years. (*Academic Handbook, 2R, no.28*).

Entry criteria

9. Applicants should normally hold a first or second class honours degree from a UK University or recognized equivalent or a master's degree from a UK University or recognized equivalent. Applicants not meeting this requirement may be exceptionally considered on the merits of other qualifications, publications and/or professional training and experience and the nature and scope of the programme of work proposed.

10. Applicants who wish to be considered for entry directly to PhD registration must demonstrate that they have achieved the equivalent of the MPhil transfer stage at another University or that they have considerable research experience, including peer reviewed publications or public exhibitions/performances.
11. Applicants must satisfy the Hub Scrutiny Panel that they have sufficient command of English to satisfactorily complete the programme of work and successfully prepare and defend a thesis in English. Applicants whose first language is not English should provide evidence of successfully completing a first degree from a UK University or a degree that has been taught and assessed in English or by holding an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) overall score of 6.5, with minimum sub-scores of 6.0 in all component sections, or an overall TOEFL IBT score of 94-95, with a minimum sub-score of 22 all component sections.

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The application

12. Applications are made online and are subject to the following processes:
 - a) Applications are first reviewed by the University's Admissions Office.
 - b) An online application is only considered complete when all documentation listed as part of the application requirements are received. Only completed applications are forwarded by the Admissions Office to Doctoral Support Administration
 - c) Completed applications are handled by the Doctoral Support Administration in liaison with the Doctoral Hub Coordinators. Applications are reviewed in each hub by the Hub Coordinator and members of the Hub Scrutiny Panel with relevant experience and an initial outcome agreed within 6-8 weeks of receipt of the completed application.
 - d) All communication regarding a completed application is directed through Doctoral Support Administration until an initial outcome of 'decline' or 'invite for interview' is agreed.
 - e) Doctoral Support Administration will notify the University Admissions Office to formally communicate the initial outcome to the applicant. An offer of a place will only be made after the interview stage and once a written instruction, signed by the Doctoral Hub Coordinator, or nominee, is received.
13. Applicants must provide all of the following:
 - f) Completed online application form;
 - g) A CV and personal statement clearly detailing their experience and why they are suitable for this opportunity
 - h) Research proposal document (c.1,000 words) detailing:
 - i. Their research subject/question
 - ii. Why the subject is of interest
 - iii. How they propose to carry out the research
 - iv. How their proposed project relates to other work in this field
 - v. How they think their project might make an original contribution to the understanding of the subject/field;
 - i) Evidence of relevant qualifications (*see Entry criteria*) (transcripts/certificates - scanned copies can be submitted, but if accepted onto the research degree they will be required to present the original documents at registration);
 - j) Two references (at least one of which must be an academic reference);
 - k) Evidence of English language proficiency (*see Entry criteria*);
 - l) The photograph ID page of their passport; and
 - m) A confirmation of funding letter from their sponsor or an employer guarantee form (if their fees are sponsored).

14. International students may also be required to provide evidence of income and in some cases to pay a deposit at the offer stage in order to be granted a visa for entry under Home Office Policy.
15. The University encourages the provision of constructive feedback to unsuccessful candidates and applicants may appeal against the decision in accordance with the University Admissions Policy.

The interview

16. Before an offer of a place is made, applicants are normally interviewed by the Doctoral Hub Coordinator and/or the potential Director of Studies (DoS) (or nominee). The interview will cover the following points:
 - a) The applicant has suitable educational, research and/or relevant occupational experience and has identified appropriate financial support to fund and resource the proposed programme of research
 - b) Any gaps in skills needed to undertake the proposed programme of research
 - c) The applicant's understanding of the research degree process and their motivation to undertake the proposed programme of research
 - d) The proposed research will yield a viable research project within the designated time limit for the programme of study and the applicant has the necessary time and capacity to carry out the proposed programme of study (*see Registration periods below*)
 - e) There is a satisfactory match to the research expertise, capacity and facilities available at the University
17. A telephone, Skype or other remote interview mechanism may be arranged for international/distance applicants.
18. If successful at interview applicants will receive a formal offer of a place from the Admissions Team confirming the mode of study (full-time/part-time), applicable fee and funding arrangements, the registration level (MPhil, MPhil/PhD or PhD direct), maximum registration period for the award, supervision arrangements, start date, any conditions attached to the offer (where applicable) and the date by which the applicant must confirm (or otherwise) acceptance of the offer. The Doctoral Student Administration will then forward details on registration, enrolment and induction.

Distance learning and part-time overseas students

19. Applicants may on an exceptional basis be permitted to study for an MPhil or PhD if they are preparing to work outside the UK. This can only occur if clear arrangements are agreed prior to the commencement of the project between the student, their supervisory team and the Doctoral Hub Coordinator, and have been authorised by the Chair/Deputy Chair of the RDC, to ensure that their access to supervision and resources will be commensurate with the experience of a UK resident student. Such provision will include (but not be limited to) email, video-conferencing and e-library access.
20. A distance learning agreement does not imply that the student will never be required to attend in person, for instance at key monitoring or examination points, and as such this study mode may be subject to visa restrictions and not be available to all international applicants. Any applications for distance learning received from non-UK resident will be subject to review by the University's International Office before an offer of a place can be made.
21. Applications from overseas students for the part-time study mode will be considered and, as above, this mode may be subject to visa restrictions and will be reviewed by the University's International Office before an offer can be made.

Composition of supervisory teams

22. The regulations governing the constitution of supervisory teams is laid out in the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students (*Academic Handbook, 2R, see also Guidance note #2: The Supervisory Team*).
23. Supervisory teams will normally comprise two, and exceptionally three supervisors, one of whom will be the designated Director of Studies. Supervisory teams will hold a PhD or be an experienced and active researcher with a track record of public output and/or previous doctoral completions. The supervisory team will have broad disciplinary experience and relevant, recent subject specific expertise.
24. Supervisory teams will have experience of at least two successful supervisions at the UK doctoral level or equivalent international qualification. Staff new to supervision are required to undertake the University's PhD supervision training prior to, or within 6 months of, starting to supervise. All supervisors are required to be active in terms of their continuing professional development and to regularly refresh their supervisory and regulatory training.
25. Normally all supervisors will be members of the University's staff. Exceptionally, where there is a strong rationale for doing so, appointment of an external supervisor may be made, for instance where a supervisor leaves the University at a point where the student is near to completion and/or it would disadvantage the student when a supervisor may be asked to continue as an external supervisor.
26. In addition to the supervisory team, an advisor or advisors may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation, either for a part or the whole of the student's registration as deemed appropriate.

REGISTRATION, ENROLMENT & INDUCTION

Registration

27. New doctoral students must pre-register online at the beginning of their candidature when they will be given a university log-in and password. New doctoral students must also complete their registration by enrolling with the Admissions Team who will verify identification documents, issue campus cards and notify funders of completed enrolment where applicable (*see Enrolment & Induction below*).
28. Doctoral students must subsequently register online at the start of each annual academic session within their prescribed registration period until submission of the thesis. Students' registration in each academic session will only be completed when they have paid the appropriate fee (*see also 'Payment of tuition fees' below and the University's Fees and Payment Regulations above*).
29. Students who do not complete their registration at the commencement of the annual academic session will be withdrawn as a student. They will not be eligible for supervision and may not use the University's resources or facilities. Students who have been withdrawn through failure to register may appeal using the Appeals process laid out in the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students (*see above*).

Registration periods

30. The minimum, standard and maximum registration periods are as follows:

MPhil	Minimum registration	Standard registration	Maximum registration
Full-time	18 months	24 months	36 months
Part-time	36 months	48 months	72 months
MPhil/PhD			
Full-time	24 months	36 months	48 months
Part-time	48 months	72 months	96 months
PhD Direct			
Full-time	24 months	36 months	48 months
Part-time		72 months	96 months
PhD by prior publication (University staff only)			
Part-time	6 months		12 months

31. A student's registration is deemed to run from the formal enrolment and induction date of their intake point (October or January). Students who elect to enrol after the formal enrolment date do so at their own risk and will not have this time added to their maximum registration period.
32. All students are expected to complete their programme of study, including any 'writing-up' within the 'Standard' registration period. Exceptionally students who have made unusually rapid progress may apply to the Chair/Deputy Chair of RDC for permission to submit a thesis in advance of the minimum period. (*see also 'Writing up fees' below*)
33. All registered students except those registered for PhD Direct or PhD by Prior Publication will submit an application for project approval within 6 months of registration (part-time 12 months). Students whose application does not meet approval may be granted a probationary period to resubmit their project. Students whose projects are not approved will be withdrawn from registration (*see Guidance note #4: Project Approval*)
34. Students registered for the MPhil, or MPhil/PhD may apply to transfer their registration to PhD. Students registered for the MPhil/PhD are expected to apply to transfer their registration to PhD between 12-18 months (full-time) or 24-36 months (part-time). Students whose application to transfer does not meet approval may be granted a probationary period to resubmit their transfer application (*see Guidance note #5: Transfer*).

Registration modes (full-time, part-time)

35. Doctoral students may be registered for full-time or part-time study.
36. A doctoral student may change mode at any point during their studies by completing **parts A, B and C** of form **RD3MS** and forwarding it to Doctoral Student Administration for processing. If approved, a new maximum registration period will be advised to the student and their supervisory team.
37. Where a student transfers from full-time to part-time registration, their remaining maximum registration will be recalculated to twice that of the registration remaining to the student at the date of the transfer of mode being granted. Where a student transfers from part-time to full-time registration, their remaining maximum registration will be recalculated to half that of the registration remaining to the student at the date of the transfer of mode being granted.
 - e.g. FT 4 months remaining to end of maximum registration = PT 8 months
 - PT 8 months remaining to end of maximum registration = FT 4 months

Hours of study by mode, staff registration in part-time mode, and paid work for full-time mode (*see Guidance note #2 roles and responsibilities: the Doctoral Student*)

Enrolment & Induction

38. All new doctoral students are required to attend an Induction session which takes place on the same date that the Admissions Team conduct the doctoral student enrolment which completes a new doctoral students' registration (*see above*).
39. The induction session introduces doctoral students to the resources and services they can access at Solent. Information about the enrolment and induction date and schedule will be sent to all incoming doctoral students from Doctoral Student Administration.
40. Induction also provides doctoral students with an opportunity to meet new and existing members of the doctoral student community.

TUITION FEES

Payment of tuition fees

41. At the beginning of their candidature students must pay such fees as determined by the University, and annually at the commencement of each academic session appropriate to their point of entry must pay the prescribed fee. Non-payment or part payment of the fee may result in a student being withdrawn as a student (*see also the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students and the Fees and Payment Regulations*). Students who have been withdrawn through non-payment of fees may appeal using the Appeals process laid out in the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students (*see document above and Withdrawal/ Termination of Registration below*).
42. Students should be aware that the fee, once published, will be set for that year of entry, but may increase annually in line with the national inflation rates and subject to Government policy on higher education. Any change will be applied to both new and continuing students.

Writing-up fees

43. Full-time doctoral students who are 'writing-up' their research, prior to submission of their thesis for examination, may pay a 'writing-up' fee for a maximum of one year. Part-time doctoral students may pay a 'writing-up' fee for a maximum of two years. Both full-time and part-time doctoral students will be eligible for a pro-rata refund if they submit before the end of the academic year in which they are 'writing-up'. The 'writing-up' period is part of the registration period of the student and cannot exceed the maximum registration period of the degree for which they are registered.
44. If a doctoral student subsequently fails to submit by the end of their 'writing-up' period and is eligible to continue their registration within the maximum registration period, they will again become liable for the full annual tuition fee appropriate to their mode of study. If they then submit before the end of the academic year they will be eligible to receive a pro-rata refund as above.
45. An annual review of student progress is conducted in May/June each year (*for exceptions see Guidance note #6: Annual Monitoring*). A recommendation that the 'writing-up' fee should be applied in the student's next academic session may be made by the progression panel or by the doctoral student and their supervisory team, and where appropriate endorsed by the progression panel. In some circumstances consideration of when to apply for the 'writing-up' fee may be appropriate at the Transfer panel.

46. Applications to transfer registration to 'writing-up' fee status can be made by completing parts A, B, C and D on form **RD3WU** and forwarding it to Doctoral Student Administration for processing.
47. Doctoral students should ensure forms applying for writing-up fee status beginning in October are submitted by 1 August and for writing-up fee status beginning in January are submitted by 1 November. Doctoral students will be advised once their application has been processed.

Major amendment fees

48. Following the viva examination, students who receive an outcome of major amendments (6 months), re-examination subject to major amendments (12 months) or revision for the award of MPhil (PhD candidates only, 6 months), will be able to continue to access supervisory support and University resources and facilities. This period is subject to a reduced annual fee applied as appropriate to their examination outcome (*see also the University's Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students and the Fees and Payment Regulations*).

SUSPENSION, EXTENSION & WITHDRAWAL

Suspension of studies

49. Doctoral students are normally expected to pursue their research on a continuous basis for the duration of their programme of study. Where the student is prevented by ill-health or other compelling cause from making progress they may apply to suspend their studies for a period of not less than 1 month and normally not more than 6 months, and exceptionally to a maximum of 12 months.
50. Doctoral students are advised to discuss any reasons for interruption to their studies through suspension with their DoS and/or co-supervisor(s) in the first instance, and may also wish to meet their Doctoral Hub Coordinator.
51. Students wishing to suspend their studies ensure parts A, B, C and D of form **RD5S** are completed and forwarded to Doctoral Student Administration for processing and submission to the Chair/Deputy Chair of RDC for final approval. Doctoral students will receive notification of the outcome of their application from Doctoral Student Administration. Applicants should note that approval is not guaranteed and all applications will be assessed individually on the basis of the strength of the grounds and evidence provided.
52. Appropriate medical evidence should be submitted to support requests for suspension on the grounds of ill-health.
53. Where a student is ill and unable to study, they must inform their supervisor. Where a student is absent for a period of 6 weeks or more through illness the University will automatically suspend their studies and where relevant inform UKVI
54. Applications to suspend studies on the following grounds are ineligible for consideration.
 - a) Pressure of work
 - b) Students in fee arrears (students wishing to apply for suspension on financial grounds should ensure they do so in good time before their next fee payment is due).
 - c) Retrospective applications will not normally be granted.
55. Doctoral students with outstanding fees who wish to suspend should contact the University Income Team for guidance (income.team@solent.ac.uk).

56. It is recommended that students who are considering suspending their studies and have concerns about the impact suspending might have on their visas seek guidance from the University's International Support team. The University will inform the UKVI of all suspended international students holding a Tier 4 visa. For further information contact the International Support team (internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk).

Extension of studies

57. Doctoral students should review their programme of work in relation to their remaining permitted registration period regularly with their supervision team, and take advantage of all key progression milestones and Annual Monitoring points (*see Guidance notes #4, #5 and #6*) to assess the viability of their programme of work. The research project up to completion of the thesis should always be planned to be achievable within the standard registration period (*see table above*), while the maximum registration period provides scope for unanticipated delays due to periods of ill-health, restricted access to planned resources or data or other circumstances. An application for extension beyond this period will therefore be considered only on an exceptional basis and it is advisable for students to discuss any issues that may require an application for extension with the supervisory team and/or the Doctoral Hub Coordinator.
58. Where exceptionally, due to circumstances beyond a student's control, a doctoral student wishes to make an application to extend their maximum period of registration, they should do so as soon as the risk of exceeding their maximum registration period becomes apparent and normally at least 6 months before the end of this period.
59. An application may be submitted for an extension period of normally not more than 1 year. Doctoral students should ensure parts A, B, C, D and E of the **RD5E** form are completed before forwarding to Doctoral Student Administration for processing and submission to the Chair/Deputy Chair of RDC for approval. Applicants should note that approval is not guaranteed and all applications will be assessed individually on the basis of the strength of the grounds and evidence provided.
60. Applications for extension to the maximum registration period on basis of pressure of work are ineligible for consideration; e.g. students who have taken up a full-time job before they have submitted their thesis, however demanding the job.
61. Students reaching the end of their maximum registration who have not submitted their thesis will not be permitted to submit for examination without an approved extension to their period of registration in place.
62. Students whose extension has been approved will be required to pay an appropriate fee, which may be calculated pro-rata for the period of the extension.
63. It is recommended that students who are considering applying to extend their studies and have concerns about the impact an extension might have on their visas seek guidance from the University's International Support team (internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk).

Withdrawal / termination of registration

64. A doctoral students registration may be terminated at any of the progression review points (*see Guidance notes #4, #5 and #6*) where progress is deemed to have fallen below required standards and a period of probation is not warranted or following a period of probation the standard of work remains unsatisfactory, or as an outcome of an investigation under the University's Academic Misconduct Procedure (*see Academic Handbook, 4L*).
65. A student may be withdrawn from registration where they have:
- a) Discontinued their programme of research; or

- b) Failed to engage with their supervisory team and not responded to formal correspondence from the University for a period of 60 days; or
- c) Failed to complete the registration or re-registration process at the start of each academic session until submission of the thesis has taken place; or
- d) Failed to pay such fees as published by the University and failed subsequently to clear any debts following being informed by the Finance Service of the intention to impose sanctions (*see Fee and Payment Regulations*)

66. A student may elect to withdraw their registration.

67. To complete a withdrawal from registration, form **RD7CW** must be completed either by the doctoral student or by the DoS (or nominee) and Doctoral Hub Coordinator and returned to Doctoral Student Administration for processing.

68. The University will inform the UKVI of all withdrawn/terminated international students holding a Tier 4 visa. For further information contact the International Support team (internationalsupport@solent.ac.uk).

APPEALS

Appeals process

69. A doctoral student may make a formal appeal to request reconsideration of academic decisions, that is:

- a) A decision to withdraw a student through lack of academic progress and/or failure to engage;
- b) A decision to suspend a student due to ill-health; or
- c) The outcome of an examination (including MPhil transfer) decision

70. Appeals can normally only be lodged by the doctoral student and can only be made using the process and eligible grounds outlined in the Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students (*Academic Handbook, 2R*).

71. If a student is dissatisfied about any other aspect of their experience, including withdrawal on the basis of non-payment of fees, they should use the Complaint Procedure (*Academic Handbook, 4N*).